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may direct the panel to issue a non-binding decision by majority vote.

(iii) The arbitrator or arbitration panel members may consult with EPA's Office of General Counsel on legal issues, but otherwise shall have no *ex parte* communications pertaining to the dispute. Federal employees who are arbitrators or arbitration panel members shall be neutral and shall not be predisposed for or against the position of any disputing party based on any Federal Trust responsibilities which their employers may have with respect to the Tribe. In addition, arbitrators or arbitration panel members who are Federal employees shall act independently from the normal hierarchy within their agency.

(iv) The parties are not obligated to abide by the arbitrator's or arbitration panel's recommendation unless they voluntarily entered into a binding agreement to do so.

(v) If a party to the dispute believes that the arbitrator or arbitration panel has recommended an action contrary to or inconsistent with the Clean Water Act, the party may appeal the arbitrator's recommendation to the Regional Administrator. The request for appeal must be in writing and must include a description of the statutory basis for altering the arbitrator's recommendation.

(vi) The procedure and schedule for arbitration of individual disputes shall be determined by the arbitrator or arbitration panel in consultation with parties.

(vii) If formal public hearings are held in connection with the actions taken under this paragraph, Agency requirements at 40 CFR 25.5 shall be followed.

(3) *Dispute resolution default procedure.* Where one or more parties (as defined in paragraph (g) of this section) refuse to participate in either the mediation or arbitration dispute resolution processes, the Regional Administrator may appoint a single official or panel to review available information pertaining to the dispute and to issue a written recommendation for resolving the dispute. Review officials shall be EPA employees, employees from other Federal agencies, or other individuals with appropriate qualifications. Re-

view panels shall include appropriate members to be selected by the Regional Administrator in consultation with the participating parties. Recommendations of such review officials or panels shall, to the extent possible given the lack of participation by one or more parties, be reached in a manner identical to that for arbitration of disputes specified in paragraphs (f)(2)(i) through (f)(2)(vii) of this section.

(g) *Definitions.* For the purposes of this section:

(1) *Dispute Resolution Mechanism* means the EPA mechanism established pursuant to the requirements of Clean Water Act section 518(e) for resolving unreasonable consequences that arise as a result of differing water quality standards that may be set by States and Indian Tribes located on common bodies of water.

(2) *Parties* to a State-Tribal dispute include the State and the Tribe and may, at the discretion of the Regional Administrator, include an NPDES permittee, citizen, citizen group, or other affected entity.

[56 FR 64894, Dec. 12, 1991, as amended at 59 FR 64344, Dec. 14, 1994]

§ 131.8 Requirements for Indian Tribes to administer a water quality standards program.

(a) The Regional Administrator, as determined based on OMB Circular A-105, may accept and approve a tribal application for purposes of administering a water quality standards program if the Tribe meets the following criteria:

(1) The Indian Tribe is recognized by the Secretary of the Interior and meets the definitions in § 131.3 (k) and (l),

(2) The Indian Tribe has a governing body carrying out substantial governmental duties and powers,

(3) The water quality standards program to be administered by the Indian Tribe pertains to the management and protection of water resources which are within the borders of the Indian reservation and held by the Indian Tribe, within the borders of the Indian reservation and held by the United States in trust for Indians, within the borders of the Indian reservation and held by a member of the Indian Tribe if such property interest is subject to a trust

restriction on alienation, or otherwise within the borders of the Indian reservation, and

(4) The Indian Tribe is reasonably expected to be capable, in the Regional Administrator's judgment, of carrying out the functions of an effective water quality standards program in a manner consistent with the terms and purposes of the Act and applicable regulations.

(b) Requests by Indian Tribes for administration of a water quality standards program should be submitted to the lead EPA Regional Administrator. The application shall include the following information:

(1) A statement that the Tribe is recognized by the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) A descriptive statement demonstrating that the Tribal governing body is currently carrying out substantial governmental duties and powers over a defined area. The statement should:

(i) Describe the form of the Tribal government;

(ii) Describe the types of governmental functions currently performed by the Tribal governing body such as, but not limited to, the exercise of police powers affecting (or relating to) the health, safety, and welfare of the affected population, taxation, and the exercise of the power of eminent domain; and

(iii) Identify the source of the Tribal government's authority to carry out the governmental functions currently being performed.

(3) A descriptive statement of the Indian Tribe's authority to regulate water quality. The statement should include:

(i) A map or legal description of the area over which the Indian Tribe asserts authority to regulate surface water quality;

(ii) A statement by the Tribe's legal counsel (or equivalent official) which describes the basis for the Tribes assertion of authority and which may include a copy of documents such as Tribal constitutions, by-laws, charters, executive orders, codes, ordinances, and/or resolutions which support the Tribe's assertion of authority; and

(iii) An identification of the surface waters for which the Tribe proposes to establish water quality standards.

(4) A narrative statement describing the capability of the Indian Tribe to administer an effective water quality standards program. The narrative statement should include:

(i) A description of the Indian Tribe's previous management experience which may include the administration of programs and services authorized by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 *et seq.*), the Indian Mineral Development Act (25 U.S.C. 2101 *et seq.*), or the Indian Sanitation Facility Construction Activity Act (42 U.S.C. 2004a);

(ii) A list of existing environmental or public health programs administered by the Tribal governing body and copies of related Tribal laws, policies, and regulations;

(iii) A description of the entity (or entities) which exercise the executive, legislative, and judicial functions of the Tribal government;

(iv) A description of the existing, or proposed, agency of the Indian Tribe which will assume primary responsibility for establishing, reviewing, implementing and revising water quality standards;

(v) A description of the technical and administrative capabilities of the staff to administer and manage an effective water quality standards program or a plan which proposes how the Tribe will acquire additional administrative and technical expertise. The plan must address how the Tribe will obtain the funds to acquire the administrative and technical expertise.

(5) Additional documentation required by the Regional Administrator which, in the judgment of the Regional Administrator, is necessary to support a Tribal application.

(6) Where the Tribe has previously qualified for eligibility or "treatment as a state" under a Clean Water Act or Safe Drinking Water Act program, the Tribe need only provide the required information which has not been submitted in a previous application.

(c) Procedure for processing an Indian Tribe's application.

(1) The Regional Administrator shall process an application of an Indian

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Tribe submitted pursuant to § 131.8(b) in a timely manner. He shall promptly notify the Indian Tribe of receipt of the application.

(2) Within 30 days after receipt of the Indian Tribe's application the Regional Administrator shall provide appropriate notice. Notice shall:

(i) Include information on the substance and basis of the Tribe's assertion of authority to regulate the quality of reservation waters; and

(ii) Be provided to all appropriate governmental entities.

(3) The Regional Administrator shall provide 30 days for comments to be submitted on the Tribal application. Comments shall be limited to the Tribe's assertion of authority.

(4) If a Tribe's asserted authority is subject to a competing or conflicting claim, the Regional Administrator, after due consideration, and in consideration of other comments received, shall determine whether the Tribe has adequately demonstrated that it meets the requirements of § 131.8(a)(3).

(5) Where the Regional Administrator determines that a Tribe meets the requirements of this section, he shall promptly provide written notification to the Indian Tribe that the Tribe is authorized to administer the Water Quality Standards program.

[56 FR 64895, Dec. 12, 1991, as amended at 59 FR 64344, Dec. 14, 1994]

Subpart B—Establishment of Water Quality Standards

§ 131.10 Designation of uses.

(a) Each State must specify appropriate water uses to be achieved and protected. The classification of the waters of the State must take into consideration the use and value of water for public water supplies, protection and propagation of fish, shellfish and wildlife, recreation in and on the water, agricultural, industrial, and other purposes including navigation. In no case shall a State adopt waste transport or waste assimilation as a designated use for any waters of the United States.

(b) In designating uses of a water body and the appropriate criteria for those uses, the State shall take into

consideration the water quality standards of downstream waters and shall ensure that its water quality standards provide for the attainment and maintenance of the water quality standards of downstream waters.

(c) States may adopt sub-categories of a use and set the appropriate criteria to reflect varying needs of such sub-categories of uses, for instance, to differentiate between cold water and warm water fisheries.

(d) At a minimum, uses are deemed attainable if they can be achieved by the imposition of effluent limits required under sections 301(b) and 306 of the Act and cost-effective and reasonable best management practices for nonpoint source control.

(e) Prior to adding or removing any use, or establishing sub-categories of a use, the State shall provide notice and an opportunity for a public hearing under § 131.20(b) of this regulation.

(f) States may adopt seasonal uses as an alternative to reclassifying a water body or segment thereof to uses requiring less stringent water quality criteria. If seasonal uses are adopted, water quality criteria should be adjusted to reflect the seasonal uses, however, such criteria shall not preclude the attainment and maintenance of a more protective use in another season.

(g) States may remove a designated use which is *not* an existing use, as defined in § 131.3, or establish sub-categories of a use if the State can demonstrate that attaining the designated use is not feasible because:

(1) Naturally occurring pollutant concentrations prevent the attainment of the use; or

(2) Natural, ephemeral, intermittent or low flow conditions or water levels prevent the attainment of the use, unless these conditions may be compensated for by the discharge of sufficient volume of effluent discharges without violating State water conservation requirements to enable uses to be met; or

(3) Human caused conditions or sources of pollution prevent the attainment of the use and cannot be remedied or would cause more environmental damage to correct than to leave in place; or